

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 10. This sheet, which includes Figs. 10-12, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 10-12.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet (1).

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-43 are pending. Claims 42-45 are newly added. Claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 29, 36, 37, 38, and 39 are amended. Support for the amendments to Claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 29, 36, 37, 38, and 39 is self-evident. Support for newly added Claim 42 can be found in Claim 7, for example. Support for newly added Claim 43 can be found in Claim 9, for example. Support for newly added Claims 44 and 45 can be found in the specification in the published application in numbered paragraphs [0007], [0010], [0086], and [0102] for example. Fig. 10 is amended to add a lead line, and support for this amendment to Fig. 10 is self-evident. The Abstract is amended to delete certain language objected to by the Examiner, and support for the amendment to the Abstract is self-evident. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Restriction Requirement addressed in the response filed on November 4, 2009, was withdrawn. The drawings were objected to as not including a proper lead line in Fig. 10 for reference character (SB2). The drawings were objected to as not depicting all of the features recited in Claims 2 and 3. The Abstract was objected to as including improper language and for exceeding 150 words in length. Claims 14, 15, 17-22, and 37-38 were objected to for informalities. Claims 1-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 1-35 were provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over Claims 1-32 of copending Application Serial No. 10/580,607. Claims 1, 4-6, 23-25, and 36-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Metcalf (WO 00/08301, herein

"Metcalfe").¹ Claims 10-12 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Metcalfe.

OBJECTIONS TO SPECIFICATION AND DRAWINGS

Regarding the objection to Fig. 10 for not including a proper lead line for reference character (SB2), Fig. 10 is amended on a replacement sheet submitted herewith. The replacement sheet includes the above-noted lead line. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection to the drawings is overcome.

Regarding the objection to the drawings as not showing all of the features recited in Claims 2 and 3, Applicants respectfully submit that, as Figs. 3-10 show cross-sections of the various components of the joint recited in the claims, an angle, for example, a line tilting toward the left or the right, will define a conical section. Depending on the direction of the angle, the conical section may define a negative cone, i.e., a concave surface; or may define a positive cone, i.e., a convex surface. Accordingly, as shown in Fig. 3, the surface (SB2) defines a positive cone, or a convex surface (once the profile depicted in Fig. 3 is rotated around the axis of the joint). Additionally, the surface (SB3) shown in Fig. 4 (once rotated around the axis of rotation of the joint) defines a negative cone, i.e., a concave surface. Thus, Figs. 3 and 4 depict one example of the features recited in Claim 2.

Similarly, Figs. 10 and 11 depict surfaces (SB2) and (SB3) as concave and convex surfaces, respectively. Accordingly, Figs. 10 and 11 depict one example of the features recited in Claim 3. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to the specification for including the phrase "the invention relates to" and for exceeding 150 words in length, the Abstract is amended to include no more

¹ The outstanding Office Action refers to U.S. 6,722,433 in discussing Metcalfe.

than 150 words and to delete the phrase "the invention relates to." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the objection to the specification is overcome.

Regarding the objection to Claims 14, 15, 17-22, 37, and 38 on page 4 of the outstanding Office Action, these claims are amended in accordance with the language suggested in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that these objections to the claims are overcome.

REJECTIONS FOR INDEFINITENESS

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1-41 as indefinite, that rejection is respectfully traversed by the present response.

Regarding **Claim 1**, the word "matching" in Claim 1 is replaced with the phrase "configured to receive." Thus, the annular recess is configured to receive the first lip. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this issue has been sufficiently addressed by the present response.

Regarding "the plastic deformation," this phrase has been amended to recite "a plastic deformation region." Accordingly, this issue has been addressed.

Regarding the statement in the outstanding Office Action, page 5, asserting that "it is unclear as to how the first outer surface and third inner surface can define a second interference contact when they define the first," as shown in the example depicted in Fig. 12, the first abutment surface (SE1) and the third inner surface (SI3), which define the first interference contact, make this first interference contact close to the abutment (SB1)/(SB4). However, after expansion, the first abutment surface (SE1) and the third inner surface (SI3) **also form a second** sealing interference contact. This second sealing interference contact is shown in Fig. 8, near the arrow (EP). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim

1 would be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art, in light of the specification and figures, and the rejection of Claim 1 as indefinite should be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of **Claim 6** for reciting "the elastic deformation region," this claim is amended to recite "an elastic deformation region." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 6 as indefinite is overcome.

Regarding the rejections of **Claims 7 and 9** for reciting numerical ranges within ranges, Claims 7 and 9 are amended to delete the second numerical value(s). New Claims 42 and 43 are added to recite the second set of numerical value(s) from Claims 7 and 9, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection of Claims 7 and 9 is overcome.

Regarding the phrase "the extension," this phrase is amended in Claim 9 to recite "an extension." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection of Claim 9 is overcome.

Regarding the rejection of **Claim 13** for not specifying to what the "interior" referred to, Claim 13 is amended to clarify this limitation. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 13 is overcome.

Regarding the rejection of **Claim 29** for reciting "them," Claim 29 is amended to specify to what the word "them" refers, and this word is deleted from Claim 29.

Regarding the rejection of **Claim 36**, Claim 36 is amended to replace the word "matching" in the same way Claim 1 is amended. The phrase "and such that ..." is deleted as suggested in the outstanding Office Action. "The plastic deformation region" is replaced with "a plastic deformation region" as appropriate in Claim 36. Regarding the statement on page 7 of the outstanding Office Action "it is unclear as to how the first outer surface and third inner surface can define a second interference contact when they define the first," as discussed above regarding the similar rejection relating to Claim 1, after expansion, these

surfaces form a second sealing interference contact as shown in one example in Fig. 8 close to the arrow (EP). Accordingly, for the same reasons discussed with respect to the similar rejection of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection of Claim 36 is overcome.

Regarding the rejection of **Claim 38** as indefinite, the phrase "the elastic deformation region" is replaced with "an elastic deformation region." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection of Claim 38 is overcome.

Regarding the rejection of **Claim 39** for reciting "said first and second sealing forces," Claim 39 is amended to recite "first and second sealing surfaces." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 39 is overcome.

NONSTATUTORY DOUBLE PATENTING

Regarding the provisional rejection of Claims 1-35 on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting over Claims 1-32 of copending Application Serial No. 10/580,607, the present application has a PCT filing date of November 22, 2004. Application Serial No. 10/580,607 has a PCT filing date of November 23, 2004. Accordingly, the present application is the earlier-filed of the two applications. Thus, should the provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection be the only issue remaining in the present application, the present application should be permitted to issue. As the obviousness-type double patenting rejection is "provisional," this rejection is not further addressed by the present response.

REJECTIONS BASED ON METCALFE

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 23-25, and 36-40 as anticipated by Metcalfe and the rejection of Claims 10-12 and 41 as anticipated by Metcalfe, those rejections are respectfully traversed by the present response.

Claim 1 recites, in part:

a second portion extending said first portion and comprising
i) a first outer surface,
ii) a first annular lip having a first axial abutment surface and a first inner surface and delimited by said first outer surface over a portion of the axial length thereof, and
iii) **a second abutment surface;**

Accordingly, the second abutment surface is part of the second portion extending the first portion.

Metcalfe does not disclose the second abutment surface, (SB2) for example, pertaining to the second portion, (P2) for example, of the first tubular element. Claim 1 recites that the second abutment surface is a part of the second portion that extends said first portion provided with male thread. In contrast, the frusto-conical surface of Metcalfe that is between the bore of the male element and the inner surface of the lip is not an abutment surface since it is too inclined from a radial surface.

On the female element of Metcalfe, the abutment surface of the lip does not rest against the second abutment surface of the male element since the second abutment surface does not exist in Metcalfe as recited in Claim 1. If the lip of Metcalfe were defined between the bore and the recess close to the female thread, such a lip would be deprived of an abutment surface due to the inclination of the frusto conical surface. Metcalfe does not disclose a frusto conical abutment surface generating a first radial and sealing interference contact. Nor does Metcalfe disclose the first inner surface contacting the second outer surface. Additionally, Metcalfe does not disclose the first outer surface contacting the third inner surface. Moreover, Metcalfe does not disclose the second sealing interference contact

obtained during a diametral expansion in the plastic deformation domain carried out on the expandable tubular joint.

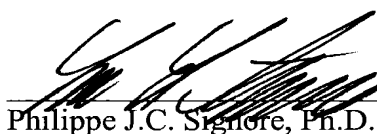
Additionally, in relation to any obviousness rejection, Metcalfe pertains to an art non-analogous to that of the joint recited in Claim 1. Metcalfe concerns a connector for expandable well **screen**. A well screen is a component that is permeable to fluids. As consequence, the connector is not designed to have **sealing** properties. The only tightness that can be attributed to Metcalfe is a **sand** tightness, see col. 1, line 49 of Metcalfe (page 2, line 7 of WO 00/08301).

Thus, each of independent Claims 1 and 36 and the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Metcalfe for at least the reasons discussed above.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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